

N E W S R E L E A S E

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Technology Helping to Create Economic Profile Of Southern California Fire Zones

***More than 2,000 workers affected by the fires have applied
for unemployment assistance***

SACRAMENTO – State-of-the-art mapping technology assisted the Employment Development Department (EDD) in developing an economic profile of the Southern California fire zones, identifying businesses and employees potentially impacted by the wildfires.

Before the fires, more than 3,000 businesses employing 40,000 workers were located in the burned areas. While it's not known exactly how many businesses and workers have been sidelined, quarterly payroll in the areas totaled \$500 million, according to EDD.

More than 2,000 workers affected by the fires have already filed for unemployment insurance benefits, and many of them will be eligible for temporary jobs that will be created by a \$50 million National Emergency Grant (NEG) from the U.S Department of Labor.

"We will certainly be able to assist more than 3,000 workers with the federal job creation funds that were approved last week," said Victoria Bradshaw, Secretary of the California Labor and Workforce Development Agency. "These jobs will help people get back on their feet and assist with the debris removal, clean-up, and restoration."

Several state and federal agencies collaborated, using infrared aerial photography, satellite technology and digital imaging, to produce detailed maps of the fire zones. EDD then identified all businesses located within those boundaries using employer payroll data.

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Of the employees working in the fire zones, 26.5 percent work in the leisure and hospitality industry sector, while 12.2 percent work in education. The professional, scientific, and technical services industry sector accounts for 9.9 percent of the area jobs and retail trade accounts for 7.4 percent. Average Annual wages for workers living in the fire zones range from \$31,200 in the areas of San Bernardino County struck by the fires to \$51,600 in the fire-damaged area of San Diego County.

As of Wednesday, 2,932 people had already filed applications for unemployment insurance and Disaster Unemployment Assistance because of the fires, according to EDD. Governor Schwarzenegger has waived the one-week waiting period for collecting unemployment insurance benefits, which will allow claimants in the disaster declared counties to collect more of their benefits on their first check.

Those interested in filing a Disaster Unemployment Assistance (DUA) claim must do so by November 26. The last week payable in a DUA claim is the week ending April 26. All UI and DUA claims in California are processed by EDD and can be filed via the internet at www.edd.ca.gov, at the disaster Local Assistance Centers (LACs), or by phone at 1-800-300-5616 for English or 1-800-326-8937 for Spanish.

The first \$16.7 million of the NEG funding is being made available later this week. EDD is working with Local Workforce Investment Boards and other service providers to assess the areas of greatest need for employing temporary workers to help clean up the damage and protect public health as well as the landscape from future erosion problems.

Workers affected by the fire, or any current unemployed persons who are interested in participating in the temporary employment programs can contact one of the many LACs for information or local Workforce One-Stop centers in their area to apply. A list of the LACs can be found at www.oes.ca.gov and a list of the local Workforce One-Stop centers can be found at <http://www.servicelocator.org>.

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